

Each year, Pollinator Week focuses on promoting the health of pollinators, critical to food and ecosystems, through conservation, education, and research.

It is time we protect natural pollinator species, such as honeybees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies, as essential partners of farmers and ranchers in producing food.

These pollinators are vital to keeping items like fruits, nuts, and vegetables in our diets. And healthy pollinator populations are crucial to the continued economic well-being of rural America and the U.S. economy.

Pollinators provide pollination services to over 180,000 different plant species and more than 1,200 crops. This equates to one out of every three bites of food eaten being there because of pollinators.

In addition, pollinators added \$217 billion to the global economy, and honeybees alone are responsible for between \$1.2 and \$5.4 billion in agricultural productivity in the United States.

Madam Speaker, as someone who has a beehive in his backyard, I fully support efforts to raise awareness and keep our pollinators buzzing for generations to come.

CONGRESS MUST PROTECT THE UNBORN

(Mr. BERGMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my deep disappointment with President Biden's fiscal year 2022 budget request—more specifically, the President's removal of long-standing pro-life protections such as the Hyde amendment.

The Hyde amendment prohibits Federal funds from being used to pay for abortions. Historically, this policy has shared strong bipartisan consensus in the House.

I made a promise to my constituents to protect the unborn and to give a voice to those who have no voice. Since coming here to Congress, I have consistently supported pro-life policies. This is a value in the First District of Michigan that is shared across party lines.

Yet, this President's budget request forces American taxpayers to fund abortions, a denial of the basic human right to life.

I strongly urge my colleagues in the House to not follow in those footsteps and to oppose this proposal.

As we work through the Federal appropriations process, it is imperative Congress maintains these basic protections and opposes any other policies that would promote abortions here in the United States and throughout the world.

Let us, the United States of America, be an example to the rest of the world that, no matter how much we may dis-

agree, we can come together for the protection of human life both before and after birth.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF CAROL CLEWS

(Mr. HARRIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARRIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Carol Clews, a pro-life leader in Maryland who passed away from cancer this spring. Archbishop Lori, without exaggeration, called her a "towering figure" in the pro-life movement.

Carol's vocation was to help women in their crisis pregnancies by directing the faith-based Greater Baltimore Center for Pregnancy Concerns, where pregnant women could go for support until and after their children were born. Her pregnancy center, staffed mostly by volunteers, helped thousands of women and their children in a time of need.

When the City of Baltimore decreed that her pregnancy center had to display a poster that promoted abortion, she refused to do so and took the case to Federal district court, where she prevailed. On appeal, the Fourth Circuit upheld the important religious protections and free speech rights of pregnancy centers from attacks by pro-abortion governments that want to deny the choice of life for women during one of the most vulnerable times of their lives.

The pro-life and pregnancy center movements in Maryland will greatly miss Carol Clews and her faith and courage. The thousands of women and their children who were helped by her pregnancy centers are her legacy.

SEEKING URGENT RESPONSE TO CALIFORNIA'S DROUGHT

(Mr. VALADAO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to request an urgent response to California's drought.

Since returning to Congress, I have introduced two pieces of critical water legislation. I have stood here before my colleagues asking the House majority to address the drought. I have requested hearings be held and sent letters. Yet, the majority has done nothing to help those suffering from this crisis.

Communities in my district, like Avenal, Coalinga, and Huron, totally rely on 100 percent of their water from the delta. That is about 37,000 of my constituents relying solely on the delta for water.

My bill, the NEED Water Act, would allow communities like these and communities growing our food the ability to purchase and transfer water more easily.

As if water wasn't scarce enough, now communities in my district, like Teviston, are completely out of water. They are forced to rely on bottled water delivery programs to receive water because their wells have failed. It is only a matter of time before there are more towns in my district in the same situation as Teviston.

I implore my colleagues across the aisle to work with me to combat this crisis. This is an emergency, and it is unacceptable to stand back and watch these communities suffer and completely run out of water while the real solutions available can bring immediate relief.

CONGRESS MUST INVESTIGATE COVID-19

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, we know that more than 600,000 Americans and 3.8 million people worldwide have died as a result of COVID-19. A recent study found that cases could have been significantly reduced around the globe if interventions in China could have been conducted just weeks earlier.

It is a widely accepted fact that China's obstruction and coverup cost lives. It is simple: China lied and Americans died.

Also, despite mounting credible evidence that COVID-19 may have actually originated from a Chinese lab, Congress has not held a single hearing on the origins of COVID-19.

I am proud to be one of 200 Republican Members calling for these necessary investigations. Americans have a right to know the truth, and we must hold China accountable for their COVID coverup.

RECOGNIZING TRAVIS BURROW

(Mr. ROSENDALE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Detective Travis Burrow for his remarkable contributions to his community as general case detective for the Great Falls Police Department.

This past week, Detective Burrow was named Officer of the Year by the Montana Police Protective Association for his service as lead investigator for major criminal activity in Great Falls. His investigations included high-profile cases such as homicides, kidnappings, robberies, arson, missing persons, and suspicious death investigations.

Detective Burrow's competence and experience has made him a valuable resource to the department, where he consults on his coworkers' cases and serves as a leader and mentor to his colleagues.

Detective Burrow continues to serve the Great Falls Police Department with honor and distinction.

I commend Detective Burrow for his outstanding service to Great Falls and the State of Montana and wish him and the department continued success.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PIN-
GREE) laid before the House the fol-
lowing communication from the Clerk
of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 24, 2021.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the
permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II
of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representa-
tives, the Clerk received the following mes-
sage from the Secretary of the Senate on
June 24, 2021, at 9:47 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 2184.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON,
Clerk.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid be-
fore the House the following commu-
nication from the Honorable KEVIN
MCCARTHY, Republican Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 23, 2021.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to Sec-
tion 104(c)(2)(C)-(D) of Title I, Division T of
the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021
(Public Law 116-260), I am pleased to appoint
the following Members to the Smithsonian
American Women's History Museum Council:

Mrs. Jackie Walorski of Elkhart, Indiana

Thank you for your attention to this mat-
ter.

Sincerely,

KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Republican Leader.

EQUAL ACCESS TO CONTRACEP- TION FOR VETERANS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, pur-
suant to House Resolution 486, I call up
the bill (H.R. 239) to amend title 38,
United States Code, to provide for limi-
tations on copayments for contracep-
tion furnished by the Department of
Veterans Affairs, and for other pur-
poses, and ask for its immediate con-
sideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursu-
ant to House Resolution 486, the bill is
considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 239

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Rep-
resentatives of the United States of America in
Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Equal Ac-
cess to Contraception for Veterans Act".

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON COPAYMENTS FOR CON- TRACEPTION.

Section 1722A(a)(2) of title 38, United
States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "to pay" and all that fol-
lows through the period and inserting "to
pay—"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new
subparagraphs:

"(A) an amount in excess of the cost to the
Secretary for medication described in para-
graph (1); or

"(B) an amount for any contraceptive item
for which coverage under health insurance
coverage is required without the imposition
of any cost-sharing requirement pursuant to
section 2713(a)(4) of the Public Health Serv-
ice Act (42 U.S.C. 300gg-13(a)(4))."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill
shall be debatable for 1 hour equally di-
vided and controlled by the chair and
the ranking minority member of the
Committee on Veterans' Affairs or
their respective designees.

The gentleman from California (Mr.
TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illi-
nois (Mr. BOST) each will control 30
minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman
from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask
unanimous consent that all Members
may have 5 legislative days in which to
revise and extend their remarks and to
insert extraneous material on H.R. 239.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there
objection to the request of the gen-
tleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I
yield myself such time as I may con-
sume.

Madam Speaker, this is not the first
time I speak in favor of Representative
BROWNLEY's bill, H.R. 239, the Equal
Access to Contraception for Veterans
Act, but I continue to advocate for this
bill because it is an essential compo-
nent of supporting the fastest-growing
population of our Nation's heroes, our 2
million women veterans.

Last week, this bill was defeated on
the suspension calendar when the Fam-
ily Research Council mobilized efforts
with my colleagues in the Freedom
Caucus who suggested that the bill
pushes a "harmful ideology." Dis-
torting this debate into one about
abortion, frankly, does not make any
sense at all.

I again remind my colleagues that
this legislation passed out of our com-
mittee with the support of Ranking
Member BOST and through the House
last Congress with the support of
former Ranking Member Dr. Roe. I
know that Dr. Roe is a fierce pro-life
advocate, but as an OB/GYN, he under-
stood the importance of access to con-
traception.

Let me be clear. This bill brings vet-
erans' contraception coverage on par
with care they received while on Active
Duty from the Department of Defense
and coverage required by private
health insurance providers to all
women in the United States since
2010—all women except those who seek
care from the VA.

Now, this bill is about healthcare.
This bill is about access. This bill is
about equity, especially for our women
veterans.

I thank Ranking Member BOST and
Minority Leader MCCARTHY for their
leadership in support of this bipartisan
bill.

Simply put, a "no" vote today is say-
ing directly to veterans that they de-
serve less healthcare than all other
Americans. To me, the choice is easy.
Vote "yes" on H.R. 239. We cannot per-
mit veterans to be made second-class
citizens.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the bal-
ance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield
myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in sup-
port of H.R. 239, the Equal Access to
Contraception for Veterans Act. This
bill is sponsored by Congresswoman
JULIA BROWNLEY. I thank her for intro-
ducing it.

The Equal Access to Contraception
for Veterans Act passed the House last
year with the support of the Trump ad-
ministration.

It would eliminate copays for birth
control at the VA healthcare system.
In doing so, it would remove a barrier
to care for women veterans. It would
bring VA in line with the Department
of Defense and the private sector. It
would correct a fundamental unfair-
ness that means women pay more for
birth control at the VA than elsewhere.
And it would not in any way contradict
or undermine the prohibition against
abortion and abortion counseling at
the VA that already exists in law and
regulation.

Women are the fastest-growing group
of servicemembers and veterans. They
are raising their right hands to serve
this country in record numbers. Ensuring
they are cared for as veterans is
one of my top priorities as the lead Re-
publican on the VA Committee.

We have made progress in making
the VA safer and more welcome to
women, but we still have a long way to
go. Women veterans die by suicide at
two times the rate as nonveteran
women. Most of the veterans who die
by suicide are not engaged in VA care
at the time of their death. That is why
connecting more veterans with the VA
is key to stopping veteran suicide.

□ 1230

One of the primary ways we can con-
nect more veterans with VA is by re-
moving barriers that prevent them
from seeking the care and benefits they
have earned. This bill will help to do
that.

Women seeking birth control in the
private sector do not pay copays.

Women seeking birth control on Ac-
tive Duty do not pay copays.

This bill will make it so women seek-
ing birth control at VA do not pay
copays either. That is all this bill does.
Once again, that is all this bill does.

Why would we want a woman to pay
more for birth control as a veteran
than she did while on Active Duty?

Why would we want a woman to pay
more for birth control at the VA than
she would in the private sector?